MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Soil and Water Conservation Program

Quarterly Update

August 2025

END OF YEAR RECAP

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Soil and Water Conservation Program provided $45.9 million to Missouri landowners in fiscal year 2025. The program funded over 6,000 projects designed to save soil and protect water quality across Missouri. Funding for the program is made possible through the Parks, Soil and Water Sales Tax. In FY25, the Soil and Water Conservation Program aided in preventing 1,068,809 tons of soil erosion from occurring in addition to improving the state's water quality and keeping farmland productive.

The state cost-share year is the same as the state fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30. Given the amount of time needed to manage the program's budget, the program office is preparing the next year's budget more than a year in advance.

Initial cost-share allocations are based on how much money the district paid out in the previous fiscal year. For specific details on the amount your district will receive at initial allocation time, please refer back to the FY26 Cost-Share Allocation memo your district received at the end of December, or contact your district coordinator if you cannot locate the original copy.

Inside This Issue

END OF YEAR RECAP

ELECTIONS

PROGRESSION LINE UPDATES

PERFORMANCE FUNDING

ANNUAL REPORT

MISSOURI CONSERVATION FEDERATION AWARD RECIPIENT

SHAREPOINT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

UPCOMING DATES

REMINDERS...

In accordance with the district election policy, district supervisor elections will take place for areas II and IV this year. As a reminder, all districts are on the same election schedule, which can be found in the District Operations Handbook. The election procedure timeline is listed in below:

Publicize Nomination Period (30 days)	Nov. 3 - Dec. 2
Nomination Period (30 days)	Nov. 3 - Dec. 2
Nominees Determined	December
Publicize Election (30 days)	Jan. 20 - Feb. 20
Voting Period (20 days)	Feb. 1-20
Last Day to Receive Ballots	Feb. 23
Ballots Counted by Judges	Feb. 23-28
Election Certification	March

PROGRESSION LINE UPDATES

The State Fiscal Year 2026 budget signed by Govenor Kehoe included a years-of-service pay differential for state employees. This differential is for state employees with two years of continual state service, and for up to 20 years. As has historically been done, the Soil and Water Conservation Program is able to apply this stipend increase to the progression line. While the increase is being applied to the district progression line, it will be as an overall stipend increase and not tied to the years of service per individual. This has been done to minimize confusion and keep administrative burden more manageable as tracking each individual years of service could be cumbersome to track.

The stipend increase became effective July 1, 2025. Please remember that any backpay due to inadvertently missing the effective July 1 date will need to come out of the 01 local funds account. As with previous stipend increases done by the program office, each board will need to approve and document in the stipend increase in their official board meeting minutes.

District Specialist Progression

DS I	DS II	DS III	DS IV	DS V	DS VI
$17.16/*$18.31	$18.67/*$20.42	$20.81/*$22.00	$23.62/*$24.90	$28.61	$31.24
1 year of service, 40 hours PD & SWCD Employee Training	1 additional year of service, 30 hours PD & District Specialist Testing	2 additional years of service, 20 per year PD & Plan, Design, and/or Report	3 additional years of service, 20 hours per year PD, 100 trainer hours, DNR mapping Certification & **board requirements.	Limited to 16 total positions: must be eligible for DS V, complete competitive application process and be level III Conservation Planner	

***Higher amounts reflected for levels I-IV are for shared employees**

****Board requirements are: Minimum of 6 meetings with a quorum and 6 cumulative hours of approved training obtained by the board in the last 12 month period.**

District Specialist Testing (Must pass 5 of 7)
Conservation Practices
Soils
Basic Survey
Conservation Planning
District Operations
Financial
MoSWIMS

Fulfill 2 out of 3 categories and attend Grazing School

Plan
Conservation Planner Level 1
Design
Engineering Job Approval (Level 2) **OR** Grazing Job Approval **OR** Nutrient Certification **OR** Ecological Sciences
Report
Document Management System

State Stipend only increased at the quarter (July 1, Oct. 1, Jan. 1, and Apr. 1) and if all requirements have been met and appropriate documentation is received. In order to receive any stipend increase an employee must have a satisfactory performance appraisal within the last 12 months.

See the Progression Line Appendix for more details.

PERFORMANCE FUNDING

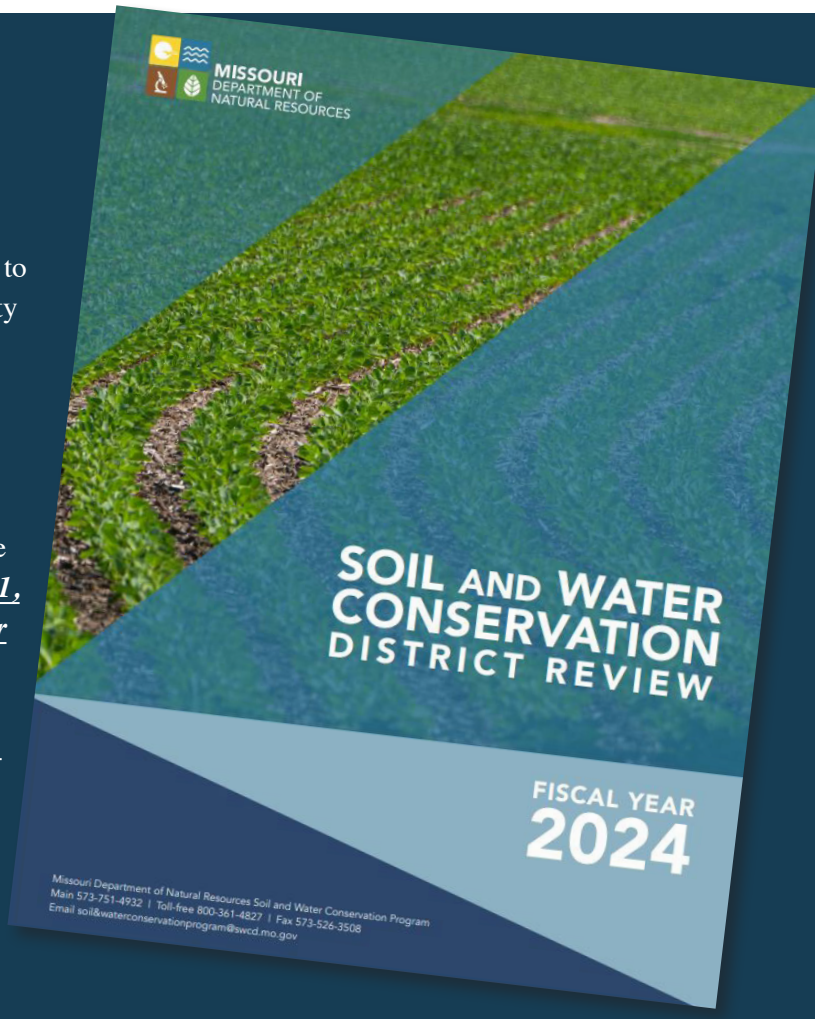
As a reminder, please ensure that your district provides the program office any needed documentation as outlined in the personalized district letter provided to your district so that you can receive the additional performance-based incentive earned from the previous FY. The program office will accept documentation from districts until Oct. 1, 2025. Funding should be used by the end of FY26. The additional funding can be utilized for any purpose that is approved use of state funds. This includes a temporary hourly wage increase for the FY, heath insurance, or additional administrative expenses.

To determine the amount of funding that each district is eligible for, the program office applies a formula that takes into account the acres served, quarterly report returns, and diversity of practices paid from the previous fiscal year in addition to board meetings and trainings. The maximum additional funding that can be earned by districts is 1% of the FY cost-share payments ***OR*** $2,000 – whichever is higher.

In FY25, $336,738.79 was available to districts in performance funding. Overall, districts did show improvements in their performances from FY24 to FY25. Jake Wilson, one of the Soil and Water Conservation Program managers, broke it down stating, "During the FY24 cost-share year, the median administrative percentile rank was 60.1, but in FY25 it is 77.4. In the practice diversity category, 30 districts paid on 10 or more practice types compared to only 20 the previous FY. We do not yet have all the board metric information from districts, but based on what I have seen so far, boards received much more formal training, especially from our district coordinators during the most recent year."

ANNUAL REPORT

Each year Missouri Soil and Water Conservation District accomplishes its important work by assisting landowners to protect and improve the natural resources on their property through the implementation of conservation practices and landowner education. FY25 was no exception with $45,945,863.39 in cost-share assistance provided directly to Missouri landowners. In order to showcase the hard work that each district does, please submit a write-up highlighting the work that your district did throughout the FY25 year. ***This information must be submitted by Oct. 1, 2025. Please review the attached cost-share numbers for your district, board member names and offices in addition to office addresses. Email Kelsey Kempker (kelsey.kempker@dnr.mo.gov) if there are any corrections that need to be made.***



The information that your district submits does not have to be related to the district's overall cost-share numbers. Some other highlight-worthy items may include any of the following:

- Provide something your district is proud of, something that your district does well, or you feel would help other districts
- Send a specific cost-share practice project that turned out well.
- General information about your staff/board/district, e.g. how long staff has been with the district.
- A particular event the district sponsored.

Each district works hard and the Program Office wants to recognize your great work. Please reach out to Kelsey Kempker if you need assistance with your district's highlight or review the FY24 Annual Report located on the Soil and Water Intranet Page for ideas that other districts have previously submitted.

This publication provides a central location for access to valuable information by anyone that is interested, giving districts the ability to work more collaboratively and help make the soil and water conservation program the best that it can be.

MISSOURI CONSERVATION FEDERATION AWARD RECIPIENT

In March of 2025, Jim Plassmeyer, the Soil and Water Conservation Program's director, was named the Conservation Federation of Missouri's 2024 Soil Conservationist of the Year. This prestigious award was presented to Jim for the leadership he provided during the multiple year drought Missouri saw beginning in June 2022, when he began his tenure as director of the program through June of 2025. We appreciate Jim's leadership and strides taken to support the mission of the Soil and Water Conservation Program to protect our soil and improve our water quality.

SHAREPOINT

As the State of Missouri progresses in technology, state employees and SWCD district staff alike will be moving away from shared drive storage and moving towards web-based technology hubs. By September, all staff will be transitioning to the web-based platform SharePoint to store, organize and collaborate documents. Districts will no longer have access to their shared storage drives and will instead be in their own SharePoint groups. Please be on the lookout for upcoming trainings to provide additional details and hands-on demonstrations of how to utilize the SharePoint platform.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

District funding is in part based off of the annual Need Assessment. The information from the Needs Assessment is submitted each October to the Program Office. This tool is a way for the state Soil and Water Districts Commission to determine how best to allocate state cost-share funds to districts. It utilizes a minimum of two fiscal years of data to determine how much a district could potentially obligate for the upcoming FY. These values are entered in MOSWIMS under the Cost Share tab subsection Needs Assessment. Districts should attempt to make reasonable and realistic values that best reflect their district's needs so that the commission can make the best possible budget estimation for the program's needs. This could mean that a district requests no changes in a certain resource concern, or they could add a resource concern they had never previously utilized, further widening the scope of assistance the district is able to offer their landowners. Once values are entered into the Needs Assessment section, the district needs to be sure to go to the Reports section and choose the management section and reports available Needs Assessment section which will allow the form to be printed with signature lines for the board to sign and submit. The form must be submitted to the program office by 4 p.m. Oct. 31, 2025. Failing to submit this form could impact how quickly a district receives its initial allocation.

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Franklin County is about one hour west of St. Louis, and as such, has a growing rural base. Our area has been graced with a good mix of fertile bottom ground, hills, pasture and woods. As such, the FCSWCD has adapted to the everchanging landscape and development that comes with growth. As the population has increased, farms have moved from larger to smaller tracts. This has been both a challenge and a blessing for us to adapt to. It has slowed, but not stopped, the need for larger terrace, wascob and structure practices for erosion; but has opened up more opportunities for grazing, seeding and sensitive area practices. The greatest benefit has been the added base of landowners and cost-share participants to our county.

The challenge of adapting to change is never easy, but, as we embrace it, we are finding it both beneficial and rewarding.

UPCOMING DATES

Area Meetings: 8/26-28/2025
Program Office Closed: 9/1/2025